

Mission Work in Cuba

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War has swept away the barriers which for centuries have stood in the way of liberty, enlightenment, and progress, and opened the way for the admittance of those forces which must work in the moral and material regeneration of the island. Let us hope that its dread work is forever done here, and as its din and smoke clear away we may take a view of present conditions and infer therefrom what are Cuba's needs and prospects.

One of the first things the United States government did was to take the census of the island. That census was a revelation even to those who were able to make a fair estimate of the conditions here existing. It is the strongest indictment of Romanism that could be furnished. The population of Cuba is 1,597,797, with 552,928 of school age. Of this number, only 49,414 were attending school when the enumeration was made. Of the entire population of the island, only 1,958 persons were reported as having a "superior education." Two-thirds of the population of Cuba are illiterate. Only nine per cent of the population of Cuba is foreign born, and only thirty-two per cent are negroes and persons having negro blood in their veins. This is one of the surprises of the Cuban census, the popular idea being that Cuba is a negro country. Such is not the case. The army of native-born illiterate white people rise up to condemn Romanism and the Spanish government.

The most degrading fact revealed by this Cuban census is the fact that only twenty-four per cent of the adult population is married. Outside the city of Havana the per cent falls below that figure. In Pinar del Rio Province it is fifteen per cent; in Mantanzas it is thirteen per cent, and in Santiago only twelve per cent have ever been lawfully married. This reveals the fact that a very large majority of the adult population are living together by mutual consent without any legal marriage ever having united them as husband and wife. This degrading and disgraceful state of things is chargeable directly to the Roman Catholic Church, the fees exacted by the priests being such that the poor could not pay them. The state of morals brought about by the facts mentioned can more properly be imagined than described. By recent legislation by the military government marriage is made easier, and all duly ordained ministers may perform the ceremony. The monopoly of the priests has been destroyed, and the public morals will be improved. None of our missionaries will exact fees for the marriage ceremony.

Cuba's illiteracy and marital immorality are to be charged up against Romanism; but charging up things to Romanism, long and black as the list is, is not the remedy for Cuba's sad condition. Patient and aggressive work is urgently needed. There are many adversaries, but the great and effectual door is open, and no man can close it. The regenerating forces have entered, and they will not turn back upon their course. Let us take some account of those forces.

Many as are the faults of particular military men, sad as is the lack of Christian fidelity on the part of thousands of soldiers and their officers, it is nevertheless true that the military government of intervention has been of incalculable benefit to the Cuban people. It has been strong, steady, and clean. The only scandal that has disgraced the American Administration of Cuban affairs was in a department not under military control. The post office department was under civil control. The culprits are in disgrace, and await their trial.

The military governor, Gen. Leonard Wood, gives in a very succinct form some of the many things already accomplished under his administration and that of his predecessor. In a recent interview, he said:

"Under the head of hospitals and charities it will be found that every town of consequence in the island has been provided with a hospital well equipped with all necessary supplies and appliances.

Asylums for orphan children have been established wherever necessary. It is the purpose of the insular government to establish four state institutions: two for boys and two for girls; two to be industrial and agricultural, and two to be correctional and industrial.

The prisons have been overhauled and repaired from one end of the island to the other, and the sanitary conditions greatly improved. The military government has had its agents go over the island, investigating every case under detention: and many hundreds of prisoners who have been detained for long periods of time awaiting trial have been released, only such being released, however, as had awaited trial for a period as long or longer than they would have been sentenced had they been found guilty.

Judges who have been found derelict have been summarily dismissed, and every effort is being made to impress on the community at large that individual rights and individual liberty are the foundation of every good and stable government. Correctional courts have been established throughout the larger

cities, where the trial is oral and summary, as in our police courts. Their success has been phenomenal: and, while opposed at first, every town is now anxious to have one, and orders have already been published establishing many more. The writ of habeas corpus has been published to take effect on December 1, 1900.

During the present year over three thousand public schools have been established, thirty-six hundred teachers have been employed in them, and one hundred and fifty thousand pupils are in the schools. This number is constantly increasing, and by the end of the present school year it is believed that we shall have two hundred and fifty thousand children in school. The largest number at school under Spanish rule was between twenty-six and thirty thousand.

The United States troops have not been used during the present year for the maintenance of order. The police work in the rural districts is done by the rural guard, which amounts to about twelve hundred men for the entire island of Cuba. These men and their officers are all Cubans.

Sanitary work of great importance has been carried on from one end of Cuba to the other. The two eastern provinces in the island of Cuba for the first time have passed through a summer without a case of yellow fever, and in general there has been a great improvement in health throughout the island. Plans in detail are now ready for advertisement for paving and sewerage in a thoroughly first-class and modern manner the city of Havana, and its suburbs, and there is every reason to believe that in a few years yellow fever in Cuba can be got under the same control as now exists in Jamaica.

A thoroughly efficient mail service has been established, and is being conducted with efficiency and economy. The financial condition of the country is excellent. The government is entirely self-supporting, and the treasury has an unincumbered balance of a million and a half dollars.

The tobacco crop of last year was an immense one. This year the sugar crop will be between 550,000 and 600,000 tons, and if the present prices continue the money obtained by the planters will equal the amount received by the planters for their great crop of a million tons. The value of this year's crop of sugar and the coming tobacco crop will be conservatively one hundred million dollars.

The condition of the people of the island, to the best of my knowledge and

belief, is one of content, and they realize that wonderful progress has been made, and they feel as a people kindly toward and have faith in the people of the United States."

The length of this quotation must be excused by its importance. The work Gen. Wood is doing is of immense importance to Cuba. It is truly missionary work. He is dealing in a large and unselfish way with the problems of the new era; he is giving the future rulers of the island a most valuable lesson of unselfish devotion to duty, of intelligent study of actual conditions, of active and industrious personal participation in the hard work of the government, and of unostentatious simplicity in his style of life. He has been seen taking a morning drive near the city with Mrs. Wood only in the carriage with him and entirely unattended. Sometimes he held the lines, and sometimes she did. If simplicity, industry, and approachableness are valuable in a ruler; it is to be hoped that the example of Gen. Wood may tell on the future rulers of Cuba.

Our mission work is moving steadily forward. At Santiago, under Brother Someillan, there is constant growth. Besides his central congregation, with an average attendance of two hundred, he has five Sunday schools at other points in the city with a total enrollment of two hundred and fifty-six scholars. At Cienfuegos Brother H. W. Penny has built up a large congregation and Sunday school. Brother J. D. Lewis is building up a day school for boys and girls with good success and brightening prospects. New desks paid for by the school, will soon be put in his school room. Brother Penny has nearly completed a small chapel at the town of Caunao, near Cienfuegos, at a cost of less than five hundred dollars. The lot was given by a Cuban lady, and valuable help was rendered by other friends, both Cuban and American. The lumber was donated by Gen. Jackson, of Mobile; the duties were remitted by the government, and the United States army wagons hauled it to the site free of charge.

At Matanzas Brother H. W. Baker is hard at work on what will be, when finished, an elegant stone church, one that will be worthy the second city of Cuba. It is a somewhat discouraging fact, however, that this building is costing us nearly twice as much as we expected. Like everything else in Cuba, building is unreasonably expensive. The congregation and school are grow-

ing in Matanzas. Our great problem is Havana. Nothing can be done in a small way or on a cheap scale. A large sum of money will be required to properly house our work, and until we are housed we can do little telling work. In the city proper in our hired house we have a good English-speaking congregation and a very fair Spanish organization. Both are at present under the care of Rev. George N. MacDonell, whose faithful, spiritual preaching is doing great good. In the same building is the day school under the care of Rev. Thad E. Leland. He has made a fine reputation as a teacher; and his school is growing. His sister, Miss Gertrude Leland, has just arrived to assist him in the ever-increasing work he is doing.

The Woman's Board schools at Matanzas and Havana have opened hopefully. At the latter place, in the beautiful residence suburb of Vedado, a school has just been opened with Miss Hattie G. Carson in charge, assisted by three accomplished ladies: Miss Marcia Marvin, who has had a long experience in mission work in Brazil and Florida; Misses Cessora and Ford are both graduates of the Kansas City Training School, and take hold of their new tasks with earnest purpose and prayers for success.

At Santa Clara our work has been greatly hindered. It was there, in the family of Brother W. E. Sewell, who lives in the mission chapel, that J. D. Lewis had the yellow fever. That stopped all work for nearly six weeks, and together with the defection of the native helper completely demoralized that work, but it begins slowly to grow again, and when properly strengthened will take on new life. I am confident the coming annual meeting will show growth and advancement along all lines.